1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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814 Certain progressive Bida Mallams include the teaching of Hausa and elementary arithmetic in their syllabus, and many adults, traders and other native business men, attend their classes to acquire knowledge so invaluable to their trade.[1] In certain Bida schools you will find young girls being taught together with boys. They come from the families of the nobility, which, conscientious Mohammedans, insist on elementary religious instruction being extended also to women. Girls, however, are only taught the Koran, and do not study 'knowledge'. [562]

Adult students, specially those who study the Koran or 'knowledge' for their edification, following another profession besides, visit the house of the teacher only for their lessons, which take place mostly in the evenings, once or twice a week, or even at longer intervals, according to the leisure which their occupation allows them.[2] Young pupils who live in the neighbourhood attend their classes daily while living with their family. Pupils whose family live some distance away will stay in the house of the teacher as members of his household.

815 The teacher of the Koran may not demand special payment for the tuition; according to Mohammedan principles religious instruction must 814 be free—*ebo albarka*, 'for the sake of blessing'. The wealthy Mallam, in fact, scorns all such payments as contrary to the spirit of religion. The poorer Mallam depends on what the family of the pupil offers him as *sádaka*, alms: a penny or twopence every two months, or a bundle of grain (worth 9*d.* or 1*s.*) once a year. Even these small gifts are very irregular; in the school of a Bida Mallam of good reputation, whose pupils numbered thirteen, half of the parents had sent nothing for over a year. Sometimes it happens that a boy's father dies while the boy is still studying, and his relations are unwilling to pay for his education. In this case the Mallam will continue to teach the orphan, let him live in his house and give him food and clothing, again *ebo albarka* only. Koran teachers in the country are worse off than their colleagues in Bida. In Kacha a Mallam who taught Hausa and arithmetic in addition to the Koran and 'knowledge', and who had eight young and fifteen adult students, received no payment from his students except an occasional gift of kola-nuts. If he asked for money, the students would indignantly threaten to leave and to seek another teacher. But both poor and wealthy Mallams receive a final gift from the parents of the student who has completed his studies, either money (in Bida), between 5*s.* and 10*s.*, or (in the village) grain or a goat. The teachers can also obtain a certain indirect remuneration by letting their pupils work for them. Schoolwork does not take up the whole day, nor every day in the week. In their

[1] The Education Department in Bida has arranged special evening classes for these enterprising Koran school teachers, and gives them also certain practical assistance, for example, by supplying them with blackboards. This scheme of adult education is of considerable value in the spreading of elementary education among that section of the population which has not had the advantage of education in the Government schools.

[2] Students in a Koran school in Kacha, who were canoe-men by profession, attended the school whenever they returned to Kacha from their voyages, interrupting their classes for weeks and months at a time when they were out on a canoe expedition. [505]

2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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strangers. Indeed, it is not supposed to be seen by strangers, and these are driven away with much shouting and angry gestures; the contingency arises quite often, for the place of the sacrifice is fairly public, being situated on the open bank of an arm of the Niger, close to the landing place of a canoe ferry.

The ritual takes place in the morning and lasts about four hours. Eight elders accompany the priest to the *kuti* place, where a mound of earth has been thrown up close to the edge of the water. Water, fetched from the river in gourds, is first poured over the mound, followed by a little honey, the rest of which is thrown into the river. Then the white cock is beheaded over the mound so that his blood drips on to the earth; the head is left lying on the mound and the feathers are planted around it in a circle; this is done as a sign that the ritual has been performed and as a suggestion to passers-by to leave a gift to the spirits. A libation of beer follows, the rest of the beer being passed round among the elders. Meanwhile the preparation of the meal has begun, the cock being cooked in corngruel over an open fire; while this goes on, the old men chat freely, without any signs of awe or restraint. When the meal is done, the priest throws a few morsels on the mound and into the river, and the rest is eaten by all present. Finally, all wash their hands in the river and a last gourd of river water is poured over the mound. At each offering the priest repeats the same brief prayer, which is of the usual informal kind; one prays that God may give health, that there should be plenty of food, and that the women may have children. Though the prayer starts with the invocation of 'Father Niger' no further mention is made of the river. During the sacrifice I witnessed a sentence was added *ex tempore*—'God give health to the White Man', a reference to my recent illness. Such special appeals, I was told, were quite in order; though no individual could order the *ndáduma*, the health or fate of any member of the community (which status was accorded to me) can suitably be brought to the notice of the river spirits and of God.

(iii) *Fixed Rituals*

The *kuti mamma* is supposed to start the cycle of rites linked with the 9th month. Once more, however, the ritual time table is not rigid; the performance I saw, for example, fell on the 16th November 1934, i.e. in the middle of the 8th month in Nupe reckoning. Also it lasted one day, more precisely one night, instead of the traditional week. The ritual, which is again in the charge of the *Tswanya*, includes two distinct observances which appear to have been merged in a purely fortuitous fashion. The first, called *zumácikã* ('Back of the Bush'), is concerned with the

5: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1947
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its distinctive character; nor do they share the position of political supremacy which the down-stream Kede have assumed. They are, culturally, a semi-riverain group, like all the other Nupe sections whose villages lie interspersed between Kede settlements, and politically, again like these sections, subjects of the (down-stream) Kede ruling group. Thus when we shall speak in the following of the Kede political organization, we shall refer to this latter group only. The upper-stream Kede will be classified under one heading with the other semi-riverain Nupe sections, as, indeed, in native eyes, they are closer to the *kintsozi* than to the 'alien' immigrant group on the lower river. But the comparison of the two Kede groups will become of special significance at a later stage of this analysis. This strikingly unequal development in what appear to be two sections of the same tribal group should help us to isolate the factors, social or otherwise, that have moulded the political structure which we are studying.

III. Economic System

A demographic and political constellation such as we have discovered in Kede country is clearly the result of considerable group movements, possibly covering a long period. To be fully understood, such situation demands, first of all, an analysis—historical analysis, if possible—of tribal settlement. Before discussing Kede settlement, however, it is necessary to give a short description of the economic situation in the country. For, as I propose to show, the nature of Kede economics has decisively influenced the planning of Kede settlement and, indirectly, the whole political development of the tribe.

We can be very short as regards the economic system of the semi-riverain groups. They are in the main farmers, who cultivate the fertile marshland areas in the river valley. They are, besides, fishermen on a small scale, fishing from their small dug-out canoes in the backwaters and creeks of Niger and Kaduna—never in the main river, where the Kede alone are entitled to fish.

The Kede, on the other hand, are fishermen and canoemen of renown. Their name is known all down the River Niger, in districts far outside Nupe country;[1] and in their own part of the

[1] Their familiarity with the river has led to a considerable number of Kede being employed as sailors, skippers, and pilots by the Royal Niger Company and the Nigerian Marine Department.

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world they have almost monopolized river traffic.[1] Let me say a few words about the river trade which Kede canoes have carried for centuries up and down the River Niger: comparatively few of the trade goods are destined for inland trade; the majority come from and go to places outside Nupe country. The Kede ship south: gowns (of Hausa and Nupe make), horses from Hausa, potash from Lake Chad, Nupe-made mats and straw hats, fish and rice from the Niger; and north: kola nuts from the markets in Southern Nigeria, European salt, and palm oil.

In this river traffic the Kede canoeman assumes two different roles: he is either a contractor who hires his canoe and crew (consisting of himself and his family members) out to a trader for a specific journey or he is both trader and contractor in one, carrying his own goods on his own craft. A variety of the first kind of occupation is the extensive ferry service which the Kede have established in certain places: here the Kede canoemen carry people, goods, and animals across the river for a small payment.[2]

The work of the Kede canoemen, though lucrative and admitting of big profits, is strenuous, exacting, and not infrequently dangerous. They must be prepared to go on long expeditions, which still to-day may be expeditions into the unknown.[3] These river voyages mean long absence from home, often of many months, not only because of the distance of their destination, but also because of the many stops and long waits which they involve: thus the canoemen may have to wait in a certain place till the river becomes navigable again; or till they have filled their canoes with

[1] The division between fishermen and canoemen among the Kede is rarely rigid—members of a fisherman family may take to canoe-work or canoemen spend their leisure time fishing; we will ignore this division in the following and concern ourselves only with the canoemen, who are of most interest to us. Originally the Kede also used to build their own canoes. The deforestation of the river banks forced these craftsmen to move south, where to-day they form a small colony of Kede canoe-builders near Onitsha.

[2] The 'very lucrative' ferry service at certain riverports is mentioned in Laird and Oldfield, *Narrative of an Expedition into the Interior of Africa* (1837), ii, p. 316. The most important ferry service of this kind to-day is at Jebba Island, where the Kede compete with the railway bridge, offering a cheaper service to the people who want to save the bridge toll.

[3] The journey from Kede country to Onitsha and back—one of their regular tours—takes two to three months. In 1936 I saw ten Kede canoes being loaded in Jebba with petrol for the French Air Service in Fort Nyameh. The river journey up the Niger was new to the canoemen, and was expected to take three months.

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trading goods, or till they have found another 'passenger' (in native phraseology) to engage them for a profitable return journey.

Here we grasp the significance of this productive system for the organization of settlement in Kede country. The long canoe expeditions necessitate fixed stopping and resting places, where the canoemen must be sure to find shelter and food and opportunity to refit their craft. The 'termini' of their river routes more specially will tend to become at least seasonal 'colonies' of Kede. The stopping and waiting places will naturally be chosen in accordance with commercial considerations. And, finally, there must be some system of political protection, which could ensure the safety (speaking of pre-British times) of these far-flung routes, the stopping places with their valuable stores, and the seasonal or permanent trading posts:[1] trading posts which, of necessity, tend to become political colonies—this gives us the formula of Kede settlement.

IV. Settlement

We are fortunate in possessing data which allow us to trace in detail the history of settlement and population movement in Kede country. Our data are derived only partly from oral tradition. The history of Kede settlement reaches into the well-documented era of Nigerian exploration and British occupation; its last phases are happening under our very eyes. In addition to these historical records, we possess evidence of a different kind, which, indirectly, contributes considerably to our understanding of population movement in Kede country: it lies, as we shall see, in the lay-out and organization of the present-day Kede settlements themselves.

According to Kede tradition, their tribal home was near the confluence of Niger and Kaduna, near Muregi, which, some time later, became their political capital. From there they are said to have extended their settlements, and rule at the same time, gradually over the river banks towards the north and the south

[1] A case in point is the uninhabited right bank of the Niger above Jebba, where constant raids by inland tribes (from Borgu) made settlement impossible. The left bank, on the other hand, could be adequately protected, and here the Kede established a settlement at Buka (it was later moved to Jebba). In the south, Kede canoes did not travel beyond Eggan in pre-British days. The river south of Eggan was the domain of the Kakanda, a warlike riverain tribe of non-Nupe stock, which refused Kede canoes admittance into their area. Trade goods for the south had to be trans-shipped at Eggan to Kakanda canoes.